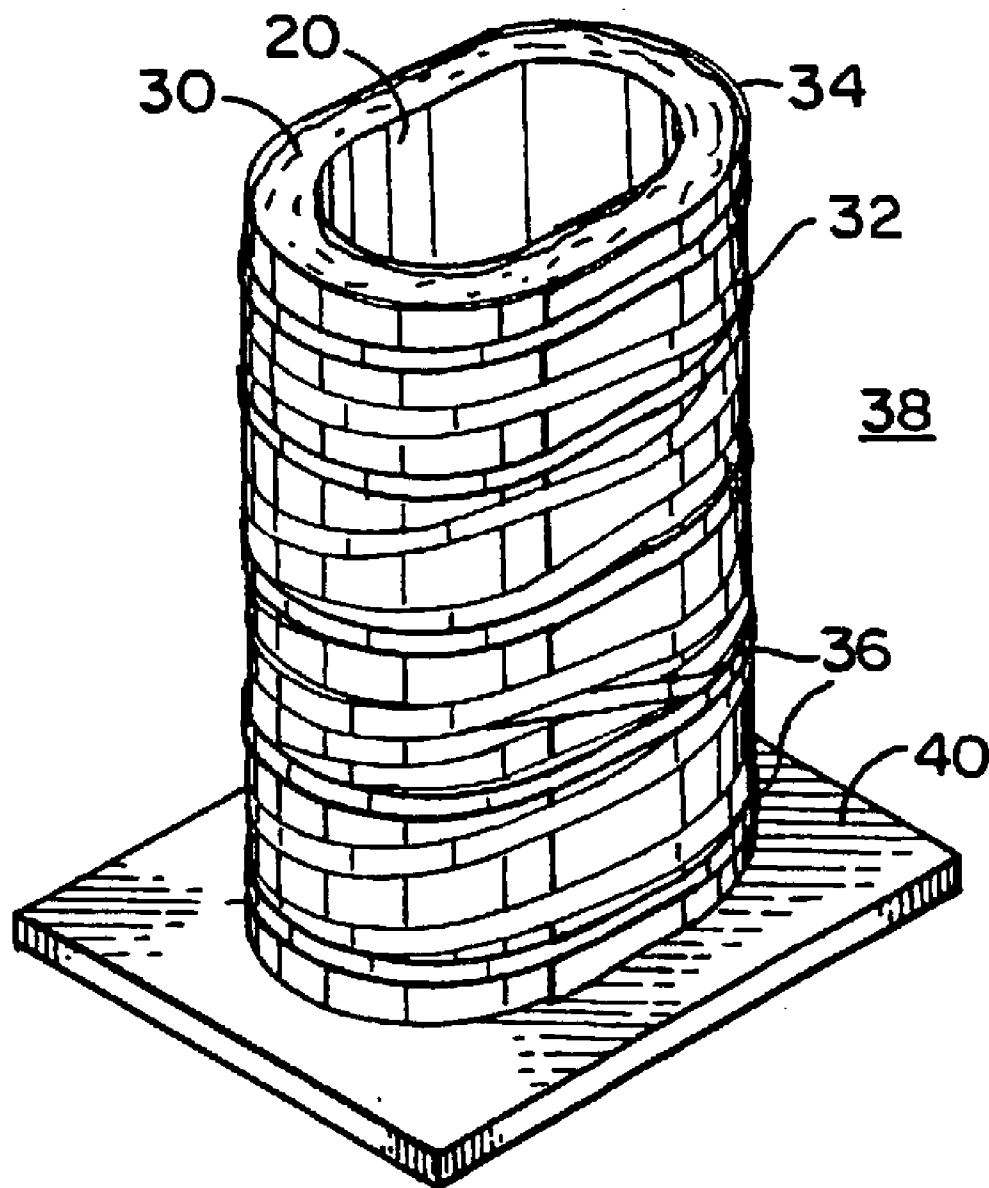




US 20040251998A1

(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Radford et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2004/0251998 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Dec. 16, 2004**(54) **LOW VOLTAGE COMPOSITE MOLD****Publication Classification**(76) Inventors: **Larry Radford**, Bland, VA (US);
James G. Munsey, Bland, VA (US);
Ray Puckett, Bland, VA (US); **Charlie**
Sarver, Rocky Gap, VA (US)Correspondence Address:
Burns, Doane, Swecker & Mathis, L.L.P.
P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, VA 22313-1404 (US)(21) Appl. No.: **10/459,055**(22) Filed: **Jun. 11, 2003**(51) **Int. Cl.⁷** **H01F 27/02**(52) **U.S. Cl.** **336/90**(57) **ABSTRACT**

A transformer coil is produced by forming a sheet of composite material over a plurality of annular shaped support plates to form an inner layer. A coil is wound around the inner layer. An outer layer is formed by wrapping a sheet of composite material over the coil. The outer layer is mechanically attached to the coil. A base is attached to the coil assembly and epoxy is used to encapsulate the coil. The epoxy forms a bond with the inner and outer layers, which become an integral part of the transformer coil.



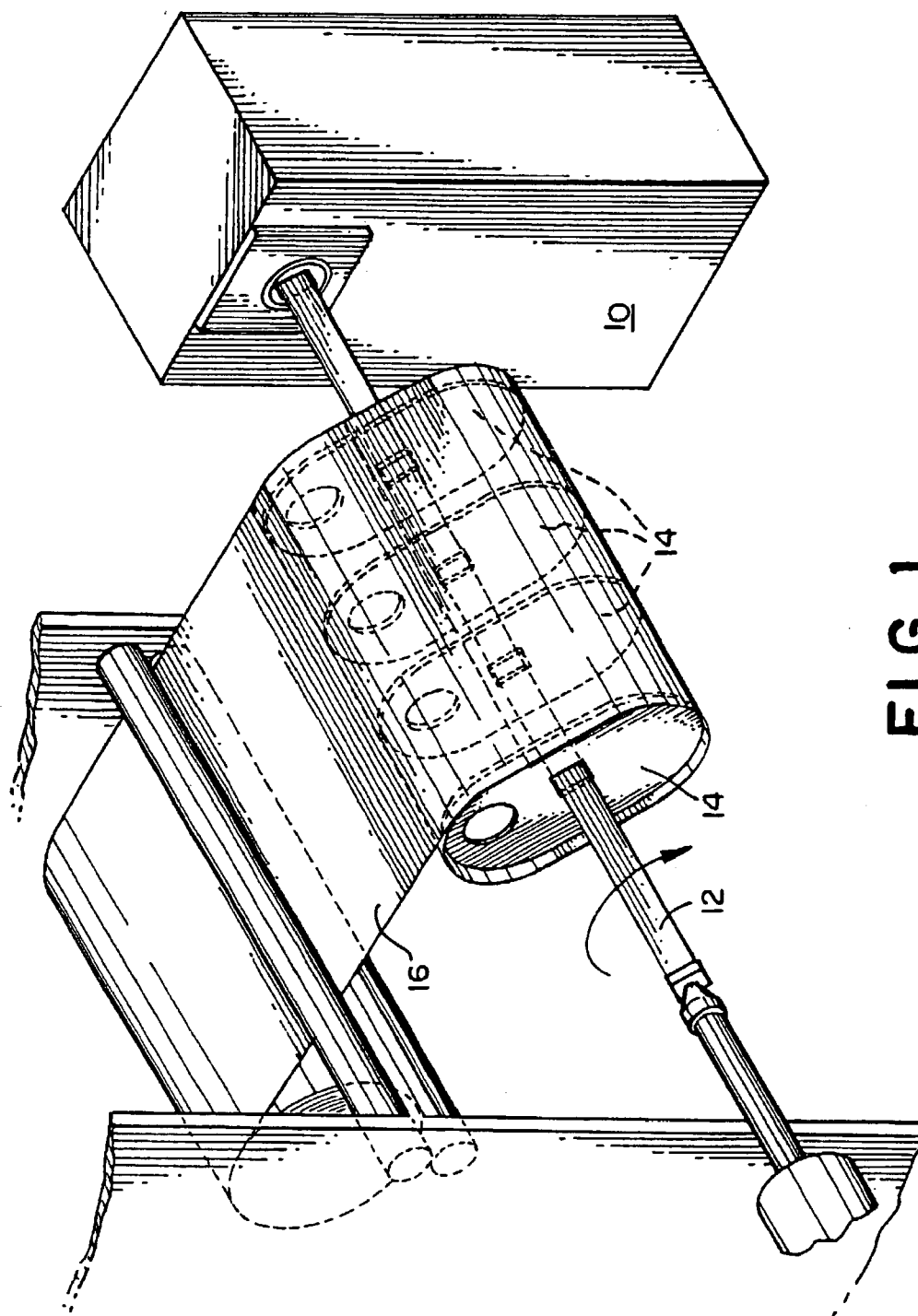


FIG. 1

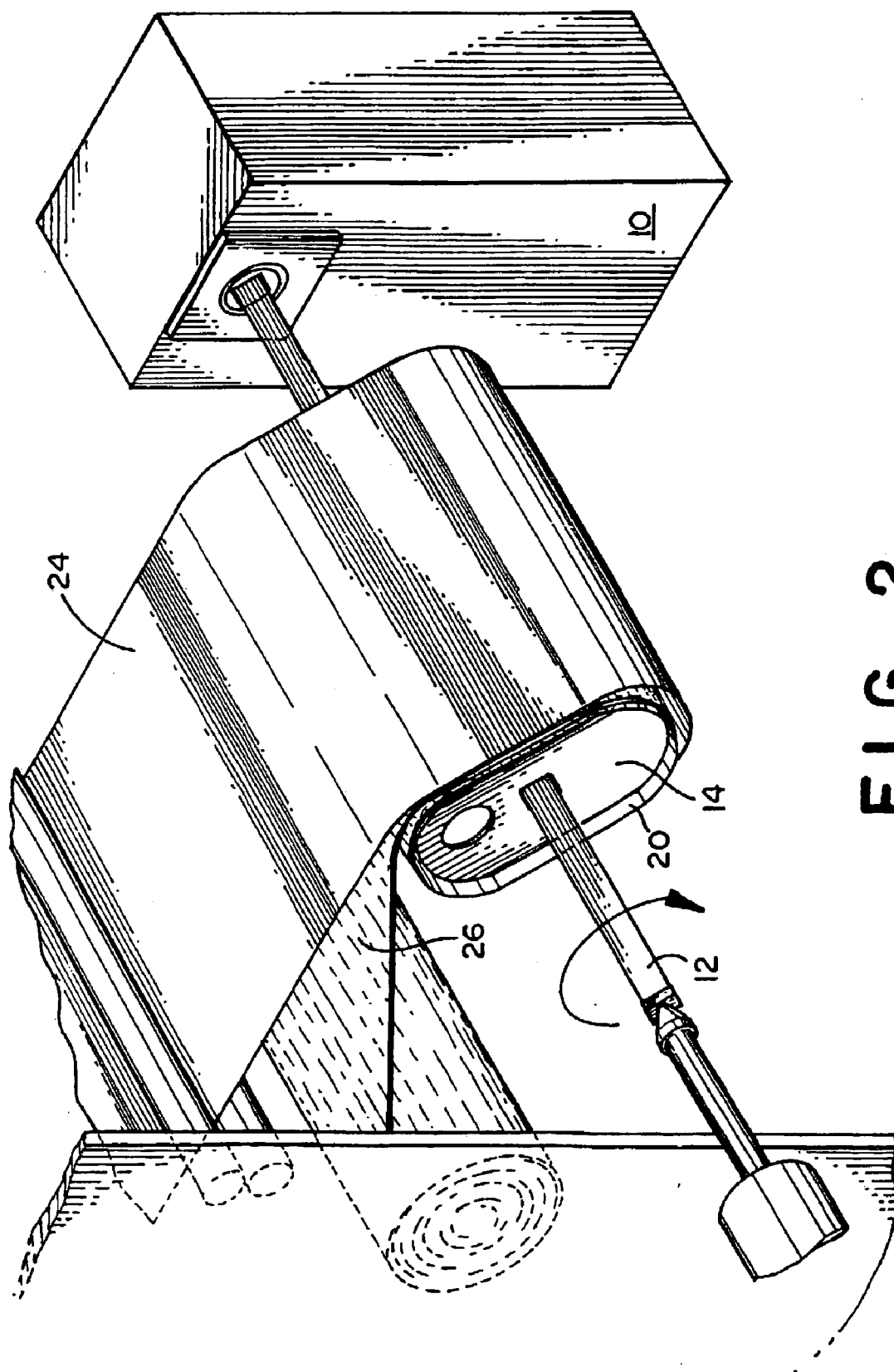
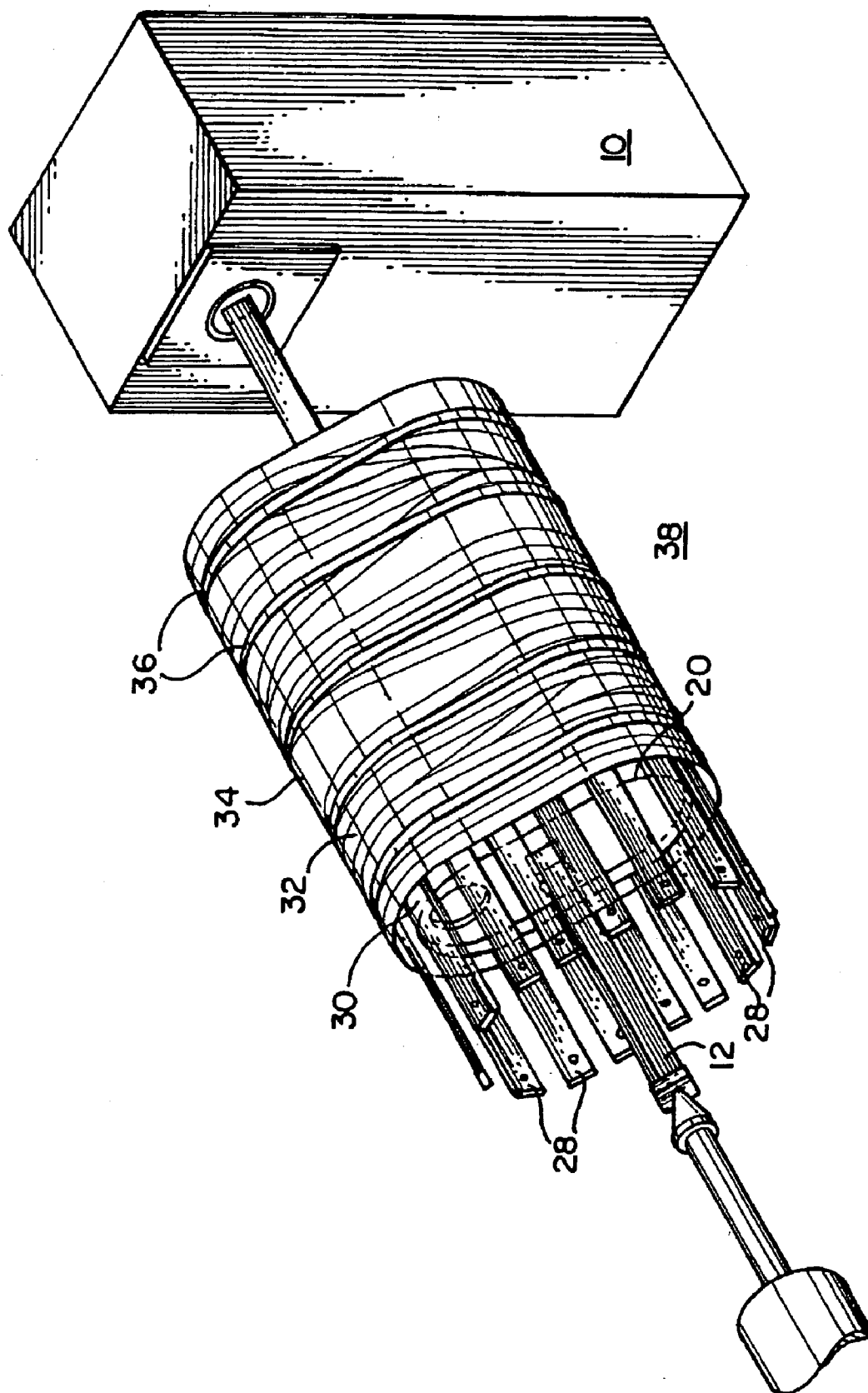


FIG. 2



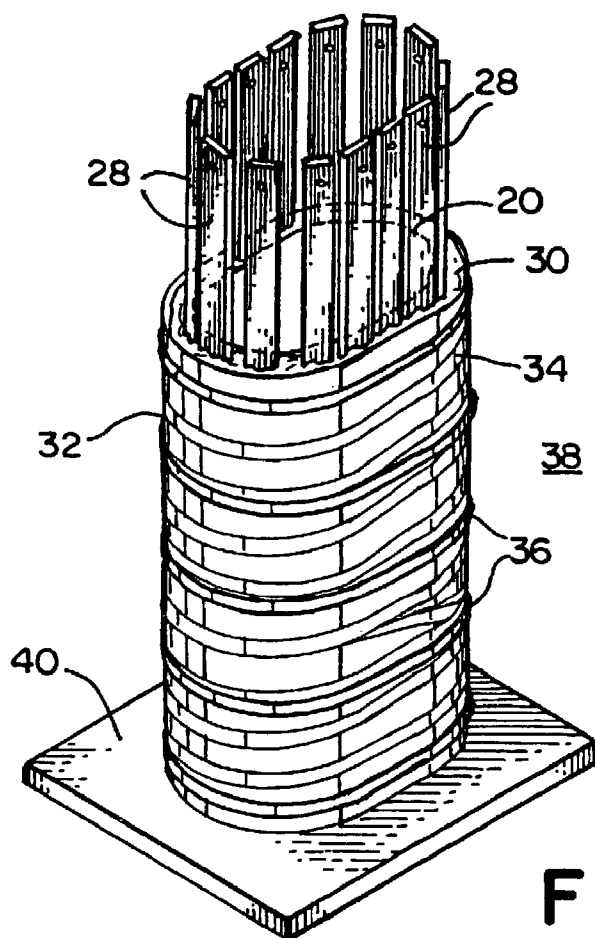


FIG. 4

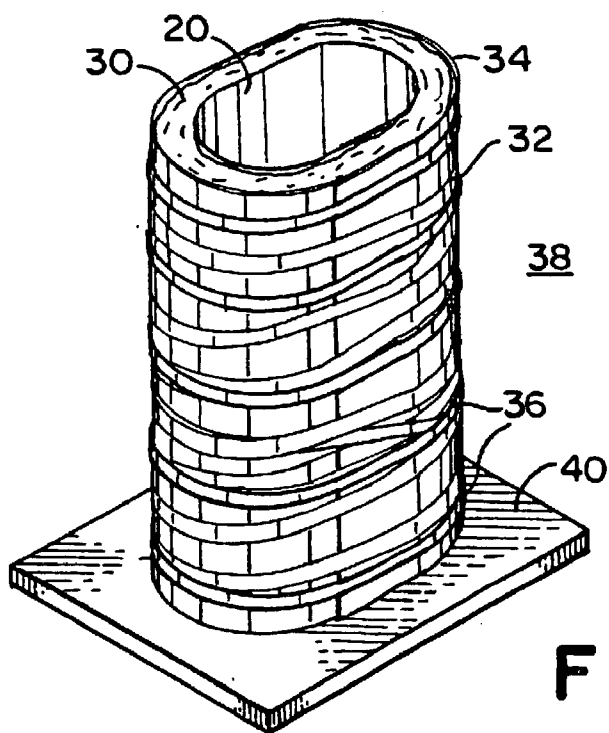


FIG. 5

LOW VOLTAGE COMPOSITE MOLD

BACKGROUND

[0001] This invention generally relates to transformer coils. More particularly, the present invention provides a method of producing an encapsulated transformer coil with composite inner and outer layers.

[0002] Commonly assigned U.S. Pat. No. 6,221,297 to Lanoue et al. discloses a method of manufacturing transformer windings embedded in casting resin. A disposable mold is formed around support plates and is used as a winding mandrel. The disposable mold is formed from steel sheet material. After the coil is wound, another sheet of steel is applied to the outside. Epoxy is applied between the two sheets of steel and allowed to cure. Afterward, the steel sheets are removed, leaving an epoxy-encapsulated core.

SUMMARY

[0003] In accordance with the present invention, a transformer coil is manufactured by forming an inner layer by wrapping a sheet of composite material over a plurality of annular shaped support plates. A coil is wound around the inner layer. An outer layer is formed by wrapping a sheet of composite material over the coil. A coil assembly is formed by mechanically attaching the outer layer to the coil, and a base is attached to the coil assembly. A seal is provided between the base and the coil assembly to prevent epoxy leaks during the encapsulation process. The coil assembly is filled with epoxy to encapsulate the coil.

[0004] In accordance with another aspect of the invention, at least the inner layer becomes a part of the transformer coil.

[0005] In accordance with another aspect of the invention, a transformer coil is produced having an inner layer, a plurality of coil windings, an outer layer, and an epoxy material that encapsulates the coil windings and forms a first bond between the coil windings and the inner layer and forms a second bond between the coil windings and the outer layer.

[0006] It should be emphasized that the term "comprises" or "comprising," when used in this specification, is taken to specify the presence of stated features, steps, or components, but does not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, steps, components, or groups thereof.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0007] The objects and advantages of the invention will be understood by reading the following detailed description in conjunction with the drawings in which:

[0008] **FIG. 1** is a perspective view illustrating the winding of composite material onto a mandrel for use in manufacturing a transformer coil in accordance with the method of the present invention;

[0009] **FIG. 2** is a perspective view illustrating the step of winding insulating tape and conductor onto the inner layer to produce the coil of the transformer;

[0010] **FIG. 3** is a perspective view showing the coil, wound on the inner layer and an outer layer applied over the coil with cooling duct bars inserted between layers of the coil to produce a manufactured coil assembly;

[0011] **FIG. 4** is a perspective view of the manufactured coil assembly of **FIG. 3** removed from the winding machine and placed in upright position on a molding base ready for epoxy encapsulation; and

[0012] **FIG. 5** is a perspective view illustrating the coil and mold assembly after encapsulation of the coil and removal of the cooling duct bars of **FIG. 4**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0013] **FIG. 1** depicts a coil winding machine **10** having a conventional square mandrel shaft **12**. Inner support plates **14** are applied to the mandrel shaft **12**. The size and shape of the inner support plates **14** establish the size and shape of the finished coil. For example, the inner support plates **14** shown in **FIG. 1** are elliptical or oval in shape and may be used to produce a coil having an oval configuration. The inner support plates **14** may be fabricated from any suitable material, such as **11** gauge steel. The number and arrangement of the inner support plates depends for the most part on the size of the transformer. For example, **FIG. 1** shows four inner support plates **14** that are equally spaced on the square mandrel shaft **12**. Spacer tubes, not shown, may be mounted on the mandrel **12** between the inner support plates **14** to maintain the spacing between the inner support plates **14**. Various lengths of spacer tubes may be used to accommodate various coil axial lengths. Lead support plates, not shown, may be provided to hold the start lead in position during the winding process. The lead support plates may be positioned near the ends of the mandrel **12** and keep the lead from sliding around the mold due to the tension of the winding machine.

[0014] A sheet of composite material **16** is wrapped over the inner support plates **14**. The composite material **16** is mechanically attached to the inner support plates **14** by a slot, not shown, in the support plates. This locks the sheet of composite material **16** into position so that the sheet can be tightly wrapped around the inner support plates **14**, thus eliminating any material slippage during the wrapping process. The composite material **16** is applied continuously in several overlapping layers. The composite material is preferably non-conductive and flexible. Suitable materials include fiberglass, mylar, carbon fiber, and plastics.

[0015] The sheet of composite material **16** forms the inner layer **20** of the transformer coil and serves as the mandrel base for the coil winding process. The wrapped sheet of composite material **16** is held or secured in place with non-adhesive glass tape. A plastic tape, for example Mylar tape, is applied over the entire length of the inner layer **20**. The Mylar tape seals the inner layer **20** for the subsequent epoxy encapsulation process.

[0016] After the inner layer **20** has been completed, the coil is wound on the inner mold. As shown in **FIG. 2**, the coil is wound using alternate layers of copper conductor **24** and insulating tape **26** on the conventional winding machine **10**. As shown in **FIG. 3**, cooling duct bars **28** are inserted during winding between every other layer of conductor to provide cooling ducts in the completed transformer. The cooling duct bars **28** are preferably coated with a lubricant, such as silicone, prior to being inserted between the coil layers to aid in their later removal from the encapsulated transformer coil. In addition to using cooling duct bars **28**,

other methods of providing cooling ducts may be used, such as those described in commonly assigned U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/026,199.

[0017] After the coil windings **30** have been completed, an outer layer **34** is wrapped around the coil windings. The outer layer **34** is constructed of the same composite material as used in making the inner mold **20**. A sheet of composite material is applied continuously in several overlapping layers, which are mechanically attached to the coil windings **30** with glass adhesive tape to hold the sheet in its starting position. After wrapping the sheet of composite material over the coil windings **30**, non-adhesive glass tape **32** is spirally wrapped over the outer layer **34** to secure it in position. The outer layer **34** is secured by banding the mold with banding strip **36** in several locations, as shown in **FIG. 3**.

[0018] The wound coil and mold assembly **38** is removed from the winding machine **10** and uprighted for mounting and attachment to a molding base **40**, as shown in **FIG. 4**. A mechanical arrangement, not shown, preferably including a threaded tie rod is provided for forcing the coil and mold assembly **38** downwardly toward the molding base **40** to compress a silicone gasket, not shown, against the molding base **40**, thereby preventing epoxy leaks during the encapsulation process. Once the final assembly is complete as shown in **FIG. 4**, the assembly is ready for epoxy encapsulation. The encapsulation process is preferably a conventional vacuum encapsulation process used in manufacturing transformer coils.

[0019] After the mold and coil assembly **38** has been encapsulated, the cooling duct bars **28**, **FIG. 4**, are removed as shown in **FIG. 5**. After removal of the cooling duct bars, the banding straps **36** holding the outer mold **34** are removed. The mechanical structure securing the mold and coil assembly **38** to the molding base **40** are removed, and the encapsulated coil **30** is removed from the molding base **40**.

[0020] From the foregoing, one would appreciate that the disclosed method and resulting transformer coil provide improvements upon the prior art. The use of composite inner and outer layers, which become an integral part of the transformer coil, eliminates the need for the steel mold known to the art. As a result, material waste and labor costs associated with using the steel mold are eliminated. Moreover, the composite inner and outer layers provide increased dielectric insulation between the high and low voltage coils.

[0021] The invention has now been described with respect to one embodiment. In light of this disclosure, those skilled

in the art will likely make alternate embodiments of this invention. These and other alternate embodiments are intended to fall within the scope of the claims which follow.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of manufacturing a transformer coil comprising the steps of:

forming an inner layer by wrapping a sheet of composite material over a plurality of annular shaped support plates;

winding a coil around the inner layer;

forming an outer layer by wrapping a sheet of composite material over the coil;

mechanically attaching the outer layer to the coil, thereby forming a coil assembly;

attaching a base to the coil assembly;

providing a seal between the base and the coil assembly to prevent epoxy leaks during the encapsulation process; and

filling the coil assembly with epoxy to encapsulate the coil.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein at least the inner layer becomes a part of the transformer coil.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the inner layer and outer layer become part of the transformer coil.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the composite material is an insulating material.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the composite material is fiberglass.

6. A transformer coil comprising:

an inner layer;

a plurality of coil windings;

an outer layer; and

an epoxy material that encapsulates the coil windings and forms a first bond between the coil windings and the inner layer and forms a second bond between the coil windings and the outer layer.

7. The transformer of claim 6, wherein the inner layer and the outer layer are each formed from a composite material.

8. The transformer of claim 6, wherein the composite material is non-conductive.

9. The transformer of claim 5, wherein the coil windings are formed from alternating layers of a conducting material and an insulating material.

* * * * *